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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for use in wireless equipment, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving user channel transmit power information from base stations involved in a soft handoff with user equipment; and

receiving information from the user equipment, the information received from the user equipment comprising a value representative of an excess signal-to-noise ratio determined by the user equipment as ~~a function of the amount by which a signal-to-noise ratio value of one or more user channel signals received at the user equipment exceeds a target signal-to-noise ratio value and a signal-to-noise ratio value of one or more user channel signals received at the user~~ equipment;

wherein the wireless equipment determines a reference user transmit power level for use by the base stations as a function of the received user channel transmit power information and the received information from the user equipment.

2. (Canceled).

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the information received from the user equipment comprises a value representative of ~~an~~ the excess signal-to-noise ratio ~~determined as a function of a target signal-to-noise ratio value and a signal-to-noise ratio value of~~ a user channel signal received from one of the base stations that is stronger than the user channel signal received from another of the base stations.

4. (Previously presented) A method for use in wireless equipment, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving user channel transmit power information from base stations involved in a soft handoff with user equipment; and

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receiving information from the user equipment, wherein the information comprises an identifier of a base station with a received signal at the user equipment that is stronger than the received signal of other base stations and a signal-to-noise ratio value of the signal received from the identified base station;

determining a downlink reference power from the received user channel transmit power information and the received information from the user equipment; and

transmitting the determined downlink reference power to the base stations.

5. (Currently amended) A method of claim 4 wherein the signal-to-noise ratio value represents an excess signal to noise ratio value determined as ~~a function of a target signal-to-noise ratio value and a~~ the amount by which the signal-to-noise ratio value of the signal received from the identified base station exceeds a target signal-to-noise ratio value.

6. (Currently amended) A method for use in wireless equipment during a soft handoff of user equipment with a number of base stations, the method comprising the steps of:

identifying, at the user equipment, a base station with a received signal at the ~~wireless user~~ equipment that is stronger than the received signal of one or more other base stations; and

calculating, at the user equipment, a signal-to-noise ratio value of the signal received from the identified base station; and

transmitting the identity of the identified base station and the calculated signal-to-noise ratio value from the user equipment to a control point of a wireless system.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein the control point is a common control point.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 6 wherein the calculated signal-to-noise ratio value represents an excess signal to noise ratio value determined as ~~a function of a target~~

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~~signal-to-noise ratio value and a~~ the amount by which the signal-to-noise ratio value associated with the received signal of the signal received from the identified base station exceeds a target signal-to-noise ratio value.

9. (Currently amended) Apparatus for use in wireless equipment, the apparatus comprising:

a receiver for receiving user channel transmit power information from base stations involved in a soft handoff with user equipment, and receiving information from the user equipment; and

a processor for determining a reference user transmit power level for use by the base stations as a function of the received user channel transmit power information and the received information from the user equipment, wherein the information received from the user equipment comprises ~~at least one parameter that is a function of a signal-to-noise ratio measured in the user equipment for user channel signals received by the user equipment~~ an excess signal-to-noise ratio value determined as the amount by which a signal-to-noise ratio value of one or more user channel signals received at the user equipment exceeds a target signal-to-noise ratio value.

10. (Canceled).

11. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the information received from the user equipment comprises a value representative of ~~an~~ the excess signal-to-noise ratio determined as a function of a target signal to noise ratio value and a signal-to-noise ratio value of a user channel signal received from one of the base stations that is stronger than the user channel signal received from another of the base stations.

12. (Previously presented) Apparatus for use in wireless equipment, the apparatus comprising:

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a transceiver for (a) receiving user channel transmit power information from base stations involved in a soft handoff with user equipment, (b) receiving information from the user equipment, wherein the information comprises an identifier of a base station with a received signal at the user equipment that is stronger than the received signal of one or more other base stations and a signal-to-noise ratio value determined by the user equipment for the user channel signal received from the identified base station, and (c) transmitting a downlink reference power to the base stations; and

a processor for use in determining the downlink reference power from the received user channel transmit power information and the received information from the user equipment.

13. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the signal-to-noise ratio value represents an excess signal to noise ratio value determined as ~~a function of a target signal-to-noise ratio value and~~ the amount by which a signal-to-noise ratio value measured by the user equipment for the user channel signal received from the identified base station exceeds a target signal-to-noise ratio value.

14. (Previously presented) Apparatus for use in wireless equipment during a soft handoff with a number of base stations, the apparatus comprising user equipment having:

a processor for use in (a) identifying a base station with a received signal at the user equipment stronger than the received signal of one or more other base stations, and (b) calculating a signal-to-noise ratio value for the user channel signal received from the identified base station; and

a transmitter for transmitting the identity of the identified base station and the calculated signal-to-noise ratio value to a control point of a wireless system.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the control point is a common control

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point.

16. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the calculated signal-to-noise ratio value represents an excess signal to noise ratio value determined as ~~a function of a target signal to noise ratio value and~~ the amount by which a signal-to-noise ratio value associated with the received signal from the identified base station exceeds a target signal-to-noise ratio value.

17. (Currently amended) A transmission frame representing data embodied in a wireless transmission signal, the transmission frame comprising:

a first portion of a field comprising at least one bit for conveying data representative of an identifier for identifying a base station whose received signal at a user equipment is stronger than signals received at the user equipment from one or more other base stations; and

a second portion of the field comprising at least one bit for conveying data representative of a signal-to-noise ratio value ~~associated with a signal-to-noise measure~~ of the received signal from the identified base station at the user equipment.

18. (Original) The transmission frame of claim 17 wherein the transmission frame is conveyed via a radio resource control based protocol.

19. (Original) The transmission frame of claim 17 wherein the transmission frame is conveyed via physical layer signaling.

20. (Currently amended) The method of claim 3, wherein the received information from the user equipment comprises a value representative of ~~an~~ the excess signal-to-noise ratio ~~determined as a function of a target signal to noise ratio value and a signal to noise ratio~~ for the strongest received user channel transmit power signal.